

THE HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW IN ELIZABETHAN CRITICISM

DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG

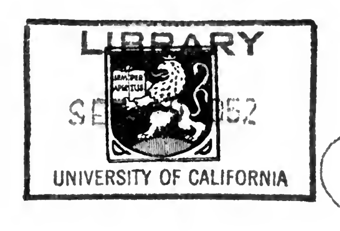
IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

GEORGE MOREY MILLER





HEIDELBERG
CARL WINTER'S UNIVERSITÄTSBUCHHANDLUNG
1912

With the approval of the Faculty only part of the Dissertation is printed here. The whole Thesis will be published as vol. 35 of "Anglistische Forschungen" edited by Prof. J. Hoops (Heidelberg, Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung).

I. Introduction.

1. Purpose and Incentive.

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of the historical point of view in English literary criticism from 1570 to 1770. In other words, the purpose of my investigation is to find out how far the historical point of view found expression in English literary criticism in the first two hundred years of its existence as a literary form.

The incentive for such a study comes from the fact that this particular phase of literary criticism, the early history of which I propose to investigate, has become of great importance in the last fifty years. Moreover, the history of literary criticism as a whole is itself a comparatively new field. The special works dealing with the general subject have all appeared within the last twenty years, and in general they have given but scant notice to my subject. Such earlier publications as Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy* (1811—1815), various reprints by Arber, and the appearance from time to time of the critical essays of certain authors in connection with their complete works, furnished a certain amount of material, but had no adequate discussion of the history of literary criticism. The first utilization of this material as the basis for historical treatment occurred in 1891 in Schelling's *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the*

Reign of Elizabeth, an excellent little study, well illustrated by excerpts; but it covers only the field indicated by the title. In 1894 Laura Johnson Wylie published her *Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism*, a little work serving as a dissertation at Yale University, and, therefore, not particularly comprehensive. In 1896 Vaughan published his *English Literary Criticism*, a small volume of selections preceded by a good but brief historical introduction. The more significant books began with the publication in 1897 of Hamelius's *Kritik in der Englischen Literatur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts.* It is the first work to cover the whole period systematically from the Elizabethan critics to Wordsworth and Coleridge, and it covers it well, in spite of what appear to be a few errors in the classification of individual critics. Hamelius gives a chapter (pp. 161—182) to the "Begründung der historischen Kritik", but he says that it did not go back of Addison in origin and that it received its first expression in 1751. Gayley and Scott's *Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism* (1899) contains, for the few pages devoted to it (pp. 383—422), a surprisingly full and accurate outline of the development of literary criticism in England. The first edition of Spingarn's *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* appeared in 1899. It broke new ground by applying the comparative method to the study of criticism, but, excellent as it is, since its aim is to cover the whole European field, it can spare but sixty pages to English criticism and it brings the study only down to Ben Jonson. Saintsbury's large three volume work (1900—1904), which he describes as *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, is a necessity to the student, but he deliberately ignores the historical point of view

or notices it only to combat it, while his treatment of *Elizabethan Criticism* in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Vol. III, 1909) covers less than thirty pages. G. Gregory Smith's *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (1904) and Spingarn's *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (1908—1909), aim primarily to furnish complete collections of texts, but each has an excellent historical introduction. Smith denies the use of the historical point of view to any of the Elizabethan critics except to Daniel, while Spingarn points out very briefly its use by Bacon, Milton, Cowley, Sprat, Temple, Dennis, Dryden, Hume and Gibbon. On the whole, then, the aims and purposes even of those who have specially dealt with the history of English criticism have prevented any detailed investigation of the historical point of view, and the way remains clear for such a study.

2. Limits of the Investigation.

The limits of this investigation were announced in the first paragraph as the first two hundred years of English literary criticism, that is, from Ascham to Percy. There is considerable foundation for the conventional view that there were no complete formulations of the historical point of view as applied to literature before the middle of the eighteenth century. Indeed as late as 1800, the very year Wordsworth published his famous *Preface* to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Madame de Staël-Holstein introduced her *De la Littérature Considérée dans ses Rapports avec les Institutions Sociales* with the words: "Je voulais montrer le rapport qui existe entre la littérature et les institutions sociales de chaque pays; et

ce travail n'avait encore été fait dans aucun livre connu."[1] That nothing of the kind had appeared in "any known book" before 1800 was saying too much. Madame de Staël was not the original pioneer, as she should have known if she read the critics with any care, French, German and English; yet it is true that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century no one had deserved so much praise as de Staël for the boldness of her title and the comprehensiveness of her attempt.

It is unsafe, however, to assume that any distinct movement in human thought originated suddenly. At least thirty years before de Staël issued her *De la Littérature* there was a culmination in England of the transition from pseudo-classicism to romanticism. No small part of the change from Pope to Wordsworth took form in literary criticism, and one characteristic of much of this criticism was the expression in varying degrees of the historical point of view. But even this was not the beginning, and it is my special purpose to show in this study that, in the two hundred years before the transition in ideals reached such complete expression in the seventh decade of the eighteenth century, there were a number of tentative and even fairly bold expressions of the historical point of view. These expressions of the genetic conception of literature cannot be neglected in any adequate history of English literature, let alone in any history of criticism, because they acted as solvents of the dogmatic theories with which they were surrounded. They helped to prepare, in cumulative fashion, for the change in taste that finally resulted in the triumph of romanticism.

---

[1] *Œuvres Complètes*, I. 196.

That 1770 marks a natural division in the history of eighteenth century criticism can be shown by a brief enumeration of the chief critical works produced in the two decades preceding. In these twenty years there was not so much original literature produced; most of the novelists and the transition poets had begun their work before 1750. But from 1750 to 1770 such significant critical works appeared as Lowth's *Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753), Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen* (1754), Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* (Vol. I, 1756), *The Rambler* (1750—1752), *The Adventurer* (1753), *The Idler* (1758—1760), Hume's *Standard of Taste* (1757), Goldsmith's *Present State of Polite Learning* (1759), Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), Macpherson's and Blair's *Dissertations* on *Ossian* (1762—1763), Brown's *History of the Rise and Progress of Poetry* (1764), Percy's *Essays* in his *Reliques* (1765), Johnson's *Preface* to his *Shakespeare* (1765), Wood's *Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1768), and the letters on literary subjects of Gray, Walpole, Johnson, Shenstone and Percy.

It is not necessary for our purposes to do more than mention here works more purely on aesthetics, like Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), and Lord Kame's *Elements of Criticism* (1761). Neither is comment necessary on the significance for the general change in taste of such works as Macpherson's *Ossian* (1761), Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), and Percy's *Reliques* (1765). Only three or four critical works of any importance appeared after 1770 and before Wordsworth's *Prefaces* at the end of the century, and those were all written by men who had taken their critical position

before 1770, and in three cases, at least, they had begun these later works before that date. Thomas Warton sent the first volume of his *History of English Poetry* to the printer in 1769, though the whole work did not appear until 1774—1781. Reynold's *Discourses* were published in 1778, but some of his material had already appeared in the *Idler* twenty years before. Joseph Warton's second volume of his *Essay on Pope* was published in 1782, but two hundred pages of it had been written and even printed twenty years before. In Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, published in 1779—1781, his style is changed somewhat, but not his critical opinions. One may say, then, that by 1770 the critical work of the eighteenth century before Wordsworth and Coleridge had been practically completed.

This massing of significant critical works and the culmination in the general transition from pseudo-classicism to romanticism combine to make 1770 the natural *terminus ad quem* for an investigation into the earlier phases of the development of the historical point of view in English literary criticism. Moreover two noteworthy utterances by German contemporaries of the Wartons, Hurd and Wood help to confirm the choice of this date. In 1764 the genetic method was definitely applied to plastic art by Winckelmann in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, and in 1767 Herder in *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Litteratur* called as definitely for the extension of Winckelmann's method to literature. The titles of Winckelmann's headings alone will show his point of view: "Von den Ursachen der Verschiedenheit der Kunst unter den Völkern" — "Einfluß des Himmels in die Bildung" — "Einfluß des Himmels in die Denkungsart", etc.[1] He

[1] *Gesch. der Kunst*, pp. 28—34.

summarizes in a single sentence his belief — "Die Ursache und der Grund von dem Vorzuge, welchen die Kunst unter den Griechen erlangt hat, ist teils dem Einflusse des Himmels, teils der Verfassung und Regierung, und der dadurch gebildeten Denkungsart, wie nicht weniger der Achtung der Künstler und dem Gebrauche und der Anwendung zuzuschreiben."[1] Herder's cry for "ein Deutscher Winckelmann; der uns den Tempel der griechischen Weisheit und Dichtkunst so eröffne, als er den Künstlern das Geheimnis der Griechen von ferne gezeigt", is followed on the next page by a careful definition of the task to be accomplished.[2] Bernheim says Herder in the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784—1787) is the real founder of the modern conception of history;[3] but Herder had already laid the foundation for his later ideas here in the *Fragmente*. It is a commonplace now to point out the influence of English writers on Herder. Dr. Lambel, for instance, cites Blackwell as one of the strong influences on Herder's earlier work,[4] Hatch traces Shaftesbury's influence upon him,[5] and Kind shows how powerful an influence Young's *Conjectures* had upon him.[6] Though Herder and Winckelmann did not become immediately influential in English criticism, their work is of the highest significance as marking a definite stage in the European development of the historical point of view as applied to the arts, and this stage was reached in the decade between 1760 and 1770.

---

[1] *Gesch. d. Kunst*, p. 96. Cf. Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic*, p. 243.

[2] *Fragmente*, Deutsche National-Lit., 76. Bd., 152.

[3] *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode*, p. 643.

[4] *Einleitung* to *Fragmente*, ed. cited, xii.

[5] *Stud. z. vergl. lit. Gesch.* I. 68—119.

[6] *Edward Young in Germany*, pp. 40—57.

3. Possible Points of View in Literary Criticism.

It will be well before proceeding to discuss the critical material itself, to distinguish between the different possible points of view in literary criticism, to make clear what is meant by the historical point of view, and to see what outside helps may have come to the English critics.

In the formulation of the different possible points of view recent representative writers on literary criticism use different terminologies, but they have in mind largely the same things. J. A. Symonds in his essay *On Some Principles of Criticism* has a three-fold division of critical types, which he calls classical, romantic and scientific. "Classical criticism", he says, "rested upon a logical basis. It assumed the existence of certain fixed principles, from which correct judgments might be deduced. Romantic criticism substituted sympathies and antipathies for rules, and exchanged authority for personal opinion. Scientific criticism proceeds by inductions, historical investigation, morphological analysis, misdoubting the certainty of aesthetic principles, regarding the instincts and sensibilities of the individual with distrust, seeking the material for basing the canons of perfection upon some positive foundation."[1]

Saintsbury, in his essay on *The Kinds of Criticism* does not formulate his categories so clearly, but a reader can gather that the three types he has in mind are the judicial, the personal and the scientific. By judicial he would mean judging not on the basis of rules for fixed abstract "kinds", nor on the basis of aesthetic or philosophical principles and not on the basis of moral or extra-

---

[1] *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive,* p. 60.

literary canons of any kind, but on the basis of a comparative method. He is opposed to any personal or impressionistic method and even more opposed to what he says is the impossible scientific method.[1] In the opening chapter of his *History of Criticism* he defines criticism as, "that function of the judgment which busies itself with the goodness or badness, the success or ill-success, of literature from the purely literary point of view", and "the reasoned exercise of literary taste" (I. 1 and 2), and throughout the book there are incidental references to the types he does not believe in or does not like.

Gates in his essay on *Impressionism and Appreciation* insists that a sound appreciative method in criticism, which he believes to be the most desirable type, must be based on a combination of what he would call the historical, psychological, impressionistic, comparative and aesthetic points of view.[2]

Wernaer in his article on *The New Constructive Criticism* summarizes his thought by saying that the true critic must combine the different types, impressionistic, aesthetic, appreciative and judicial, but he seems to misunderstand Gates's use of "appreciation", and his new judicial criticism is to be based on all the others and include a knowledge of historical conditions.[3]

Hoskins in discussing *Biological Analogy in Literary Criticism* asserts that only some sort of evolutionary theory in psychological form can bring order out of the chaos arising from the conflicting points of view assumed by

---

[1] Cf. Introductory Essay in *Essays in English Literature.*

[2] Cf. in *Studies and Appreciations* the essay cited (pp. 205—234) and the one on Taine.

[3] *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.* XXII. 445.

the aesthetic, biographical and historical methods of literary study.[1]

Spingarn in his *Introduction* to his *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, when he points out the different possibilities, says of that century: "Nearly all the moods of criticisms, classical and romantic, analytical and synthetic, impressionistic and dogmatic, historical and interpretative, are fitfully represented there" (I. p. cvi). In a booklet on *The New Criticism* just published (1911), Spingarn apparently uses the terms "appreciative" and "impressionistic" interchangeably, while he contrasts with this point of view the various "objective" and "dogmatic" forms of criticism, mentioning as subdivisions the "historical", the "psychological", the "dogmatic", and the "aesthetic" (p. 3—9). In the sketch of the development of criticism that follows this classification he says, "Very early in the century [the nineteenth], Mme. de Staël and others formulated the idea that Literature is an 'expression of society' " (p. 11.) — a statement that might imply the absence of such formulation before 1800.[2]

Such are the categories used in a few representative discussions of the different points of view in criticism from 1893 to 1911. But to avoid the confusion arising from the use of different names for the same thing I shall

---

[1] *Mod. Phil.* VII. 20. Cf. Hoskin's article on *The Place and Function of a Standard in a Genetic Theory of Literary Development, Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.* XXV. 379—402.

[2] D. Nichol Smith's suggestive lecture on *The Function of Criticism* (Oxford, 1909) reached me too late to summarize it in the discussion above. The "three definite points, on one of which, or all of which, criticism must base itself" are "the date, the author, and the work" (p. 15); by which Smith means (1) the historical point of view, (2) the biographical point of view, and (3) various phases of dogmatic, aesthetic, impressionistic and appreciative criticism.

attempt to formulate these different points of view in a more systematic fashion.

In the first place an analysis of the points of view in criticism makes it evident that the widest possible division is on the basis of relation to the critic himself into objective, subjective and a combination of these two, which we may call subjective-objective. Of the first head we may make a two-fold division — judicial and scientific and each of these can be still further divided. The judicial critic judges, ranks, classifies, by some sort of fixed standards. The standards themselves are consciously formulated, either on the basis of tradition or on the basis of aesthetic or other general principles. If they are formulated from tradition, the critic takes the dogmatic point of view. He believes in abstractions called "Epic", "Tragedy", and so on. Any specimen of these different literary kinds he tries and judges in accordance with rules which are the formulation of the ideals for each type by great critics — Aristotle, Horace and the French critics — in accordance with the practice of great writers — Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil — who wrote models of the type. Such dogmatic criticism considers a literary work objectively with little reference to its relations to the author, that is, to the psychology of its creation — or its relation to the reader, that is, its psychological effect. The rules are intended to serve two purposes, to make the resulting work both delight and teach. Hence the dogmatic point of view, in addition to certain artistic formulas, introduces an extra-literary standard in the form of a conscious moral test. Such criticism as this found constant expression in England for nearly three centuries, and perhaps has not altogether disappeared yet.

When the critic judges by aesthetic standards, he draws these standards from the experience of readers in contact with works of literary art. A psychological analysis of the mental states resulting from such contact makes possible the formulation of the general principles and elements of beauty, which constitute the appeal of art, and on the basis of these principles the aesthetic critic judges. Naturally there was little attempt at the formulation of such aesthetic principles in the formative sixteenth century or in the seventeenth, when, in general, the "rules" held sway; but since the beginning of the eighteenth century aesthetic principles have been more and more discussed.

The scientific or genetic point of view, considers a literary work in relation to the forces controlling its origin and production. It is a specimen to be explained. It is an effect, the causes of which may be analyzed and formulated under two heads. The first of these heads is the personal psychology of the author and its causal relation to the work in question. This psychological or biographical point of view considers the contribution of the author's individuality, his personality, his peculiar temperament to his work. It seeks to trace the individual qualities of any particular piece of literary work back to their sources in the individual qualities of the author. But a further investigation would not consider many of these personal qualities as final sources. And so the scientific point of view may also formulate its explanation of a literary work in terms of its historical environment, in terms of the general forces controlling its origin and production, by their influence upon its author. The recognition of these forces — racial, national, epochal —

of the matrix of ideas, political, religious, moral, social, economic, philosophical, scientific, artistic, literary, out of which a literary work is born — this constitutes the historical point of view in literary criticism.[1]

The point of view wholly subjective is generally named impressionistic, though, as we have seen, it has been called also romantic and personal. Criticism in this case is written wholly from the standpoint of the personal impression made upon the critic. Such criticism is wholly individual. The ideal impressionistic critic becomes a delicate sensitive instrument upon which each individual work of art records its individual quality, and it is the business of the impressionist critic to reproduce for the benefit of others the peculiar shiver he has for each poem, each line, each word. His criticism is sensuous rather than intellectual. The name Symonds has given to this type, "romantic criticism", is suggestive of its origin and history, because it is only since the triumph of romanticism that it has become a clearly marked critical type.

When the critic combines the objective and the subjective points of view, probably the best name for the result is appreciative criticism. This combination is the highest phase of literary criticism as an art. Symonds says: "The true critic must combine all three types [classical, romantic and scientific] in himself, and hold the balance by his sense of their reciprocal relations."[2] All the writers I have quoted have insisted on a combination of points of view, and Gates with especial felicity and effectiveness.[3] Even Saintsbury, in spite of his antipathy

[1] Cf. the definition of Hamelius, work cited, p. 166.

[2] Work cited, p. 62.

[3] Work cited, pp. 218 and 233.

for the words "aesthetic," "scientific" and "personal," practically calls for a combination of the points of view I have been trying to define.[1] The appreciative point of view involves, then, first, the native endowment of the impressionist — a delicate sensitiveness to the peculiar charm of each separate piece of literature. But the appreciative critic must not stop short with the impressionist's feeling and the reproduction of that feeling; he must make clear *why* he feels so and so.

The equipment of the appreciative critic must include, therefore, a thorough acquaintance with literature itself, as it has manifested itself in different periods and in different authors and even in different countries. Such an equipment will afford the necessary material for the comparative method, the best phase of dogmatic criticism. Then he must have an adequate understanding of aesthetic principles. Aesthetic principles and the comparative method just mentioned will provide him with objective standards. In addition to these he must have an understanding of the personal psychology of the author and its relation to his work. And finally he must have a thorough knowledge of the historical environment of the author and of his work. All these, however, are merely means to an end — an apprehension of the unique appeal of each piece of literature and a comprehension of the various forces that have combined to make this unique appeal, so that the appeal itself may be brought home to the reader of the criticism. If the appreciative critic is to accomplish his task he must combine the best in the critical methods of Anatole France, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, Sainte-Beuve and Taine.

---

[1] Cf. *Essays in English Literature,* p. xvi.

4. The Historical Point of View.

It must be premised, then, that it is unsafe to make extravagant claims for the historical method in literary criticism, and there must be due recognition that the method is open to abuse. In his famous criticism of Taine, Sainte-Beuve points out what the abuse of the historical method may result in, when he says that the proper title of the *History of English Literature* should be, "Histoire de la race et de la civilisation anglaises par la littérature."[1] Yet Sainte-Beuve recognizes fully the force of the three influences Taine formulated; his objection is that Taine's formula does not provide for the analysis of individual genius,[2] the work he himself had done so well.[3] The great value of the genetic method in literary history proper is now generally recognized,[4] but for literary criticism it must not be forgotten that it is only a means, though an indispensable means, to an end — a finer and truer appreciative criticism.

The historical point of view as applied to literature, in the form known to us since the latter part of the eighteenth century, is the result chiefly of two forces — that interest in the past which makes up a large part of the romantic revolt against early eighteenth century liter-

---

[1] *Nouveaux Lundis*, VIII. 67. Cf. Scherer, *Essays on Eng. Lit.*, p. 74.

[2] Work cited, pp. 68—69. Cf. Dutoit, *Die Theorie des Milieu*, p. 80.

[3] Cf. Brandes, *Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, V. 285.

[4] Cf. Ten Brink, *Über die Aufgabe der Literaturgeschichte*, pp. 51—52; Dilthey, *Die Einbildungskraft des Dichters*, pp. 471 and 474; Falkenheim, *Kuno Fischer und die Literarhistorische Methode*, pp. 24—25; Smith, *The Functions of Criticism*, pp. 4—9.

ary ideals,[1] and the growth of science and its application in the form of genetic history to the various phases of man's social life and artistic activities. Because these forces did not come into full play until the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth, there were no complete formulations or applications of the historical point of view as a method of approach to literature or art before the middle of the eighteenth century.[2]

Philosophically the historical point of view in literary criticism rests upon the general principles of the organic unity of national or community life and its historical continuity.[3] The first of these principles makes up one phase of that genetic conception of history, which considers, in the language of Bernheim, "daß die verschiedenen Betätigungen der Menschen in innerlichem Zusammenhang und in Wechselwirkung miteinander und mit den physischen Bedingungen stehen."[4] As factors in this organic unity, we must consider, then, not merely inherited racial characteristics, but also the total national environment—physical surroundings, government, social institutions and relations, religion, philosophy, science and art and their causal relations one with the other. The conception of historical continuity is also genetic, since it involves the conception of causal connection between successive ages.[5] This historical attitude is the direct result of the modern scientific spirit, of the desire to understand, to comprehend,

---

[1] Cf. Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century,* pp. 2 and 24, and Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement,* Chs. VI, VII and VIII.

[2] Cf. above, p. 4.

[3] Cf. Gates, work cited, p. 197.

[4] Work cited, p. 29.

[5] Cf. Bernheim's definition of history, work cited, p. 8.

to explain the past by cause and effect.[1] The historical spirit, then, when applied in literary study or criticism, calls for a consideration of causes, of origins, and of development as related to causes.

The necessity for the application of this method in literary study has been recognized by leading critics from the middle of the eighteenth century. Even such men as Dr. Johnson and Jeffrey have recognized its necessity. In 1765 Johnson said, "Every man's performance, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities."[2] As Gates points out, Jeffrey used it in his reviews of Ford's *Dramatic Works* (1811), de Staël's *De la Littérature* (1812) and of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1825).[3] Carlyle in 1831 in his review of Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry* said that "the History of a nation's Poetry is the essence of its History, political, economic, scientific, religious," and he asserts that the complete historian of poetry "will discern the grand spiritual Tendency of each period, what was the highest Aim and Enthusiasm of mankind in each, ... for by this the Poetry of the nation modulates itself; this *is* the Poetry of the nation."[4] Pater says in his essay on *Winckelmann* that "individual genius works ever under conditions of time and place," and, "criticism must never forget that 'the artist is the child of his time.'"[5] Gates sums the

---

[1] Cf. Bernheim, pp. 184 ff.

[2] *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, p. 132.

[3] *Selections from the Essays of Francis Jeffrey*, p. xxvii; cf. also the essay on Ford, pp. 1—20.

[4] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, II. 341—342. Cf. Roe, *Carlyle as a Critic of Literature*, pp. 51—54.

[5] *The Renaissance*, pp. 209—210.

matter up, when he says that the appreciative critic "believes that the generating pleasures that produced the work of art, and that once thrilled in a single human spirit, in response to the play and counterplay upon him, of the life of his time, must remain permanently the central core of the energy in the work; and that only as he comes to know those pleasures with fine intimacy, can he conjure out of the work of art its perfect acclaim of delight for now and here."[1]

One particular result of the historical point of view, honestly and persistently assumed in literary criticism, is historical tolerance. Its assumption tends to dissolve prejudice, because it brings knowledge. It tries to look at a work of art not merely from the point of view of the critic's own age or nation, but with the eyes of the artist's own contemporaries and fellow countrymen. It is the answer to Spingarn's question in his review of Saintsbury's *History of Criticism* — "How did the modern conception of a relative aesthetic, varying from age to age, from country to country, arise in a period, which, according to Mr. Saintsbury, was one simply of 'eighteenth century orthodoxy'?"[2] The study of the development of the historical point of view in literary criticism means, therefore, the study of the development of such a relative aesthetic, with all that may imply in the destruction of dogmatic standards, and in the increased capacity of the critic, through the increase of his historical tolerance and sympathies, to enjoy and make others enjoy the work of widely differing men, periods and even nations.

---

[1] *Studies and Appreciations*, p. 218; but cf. the whole essay on *Impressionism and Appreciation*, especially pp. 216—19.

[2] *Mod. Phil.* I. 482.

5. The Background of Foreign Critical Utterances.

It has already been pointed out that at the close of the period we are considering Winckelmann and Herder gave pronouncements on the historical point of view of the highest importance. Their work marked a definite stage in the development of the genetic conception of the arts. Though they came too late to influence the Englishmen writing at the end of this period, they themselves, and especially Herder, were affected by the work of English critics and philosophers. Earlier expressions of the historical point of view, however, are not wanting in Italian, French and even Spanish, both in criticism and in the general theory and practice of history itself, and many of these expressions did influence English criticism directly or indirectly. It is important, therefore, to know something of this foreign background of the first two hundred years of English criticism.

The foreign critics of Renaissance times who seemed to have some conception of the historical standpoint were comparatively less important to English criticism than their more dogmatic brethren. Spingarn points out a number of continental critics between 1554 and 1628 who gave expression, more or less tentatively, to the historical point of view. His enumeration includes Giraldi Cintio, Pigna, Patrizzi, la Cueva, Lope de Vega, Sanchez and Ogier.[1] These men may not have been especially influential on English criticism, but men like Giraldi Cintio and Lope de Vega were at least known to Renaissance Englishmen.[2]

---

[1] *Lit. Crit. in Ren.*, pp. 112, 116, 162, 165—166, 233—236.

[2] Daniel's certain acquaintance with Cintio is proved by an unmistakable reference. Cf. Gregory Smith, II. 360 and note.

There is no doubt, however, about the influence upon English criticism of the French critics of the later seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries. The assertion of such an influence is a commonplace of English literary history. Among these French critics were men who gave expression to views out of harmony with the conventional dogmatism of their times, men who expressed doubts of the universal validity of the rules and of reason as all-sufficient guides in the arts, who saw something of the necessity of considering the social and historical forces enveloping a literary work, if they were to arrive at a just estimate of its worth.

The best known of these French literary rebels to Englishmen was Saint-Évremond. Owing to his long residence in England and his extraordinarily wide acquaintance in the social and literary life of London, his ideas were known through personal contact, as well as through his essays, to all contemporary English critics and men of letters.[1] The English translations of his essays in 1685 and 1686 Spingarn thinks "were probably the first volumes of critical essays that ever appeared in England."[2] His essays, *Concerning Ancient and Modern Tragedy*, *On the Tragedies*, *On our Comedies*, *Concerning English Comedy*, *Observations on the Taste and Discernment of the French*, *On the Poems of the Ancients*, and *Concerning the Marvellous*, were all grist for the English critical mill. His attacks on the rules and authority and his exaltation of genius,[3] his assertion and re-assertion that difference in natural surroundings, religion, government, customs,

---

[1] Cf. Daniels, *Saint-Évremond en Angleterre, passim.*

[2] Spingarn, *Crit. Essays*, III. 308.

[3] *Œuvres*, III. 280—281.

manners and taste must mean a difference in literature, that if Homer were writing today he would write admirable poems, but they would be adapted to the century in which he was writing (IV. 325—337) — all this was of great importance in England at a time when pseudo-classicism was rampant.

Fontenelle was also important, with his discussion of differences in "times, governments, and affairs in general." He delights in his paradox "that if our trees are as great as those of former times, we can equal Homer, Plato and Demosthenes." He suggests that the soil of France may be no better adapted to the reasonings of the Egyptians than to their palms. He states positively that eloquence and poetry depend principally upon the vivacity of the imagination, and the imagination "does not need a long series of experiences or a great quantity of rules to have all the perfection of which it is capable."[1] Such a statement must have made the dogmatists hold up their hands in horror. The *Digressions sur les Anciens et les Modernes*, in which these attacks on the rules and the assertion of the necessary relativity of literary standards because of diversity of environment are found, appeared in 1688.

It is worth noting that the two men just discussed cannot be claimed as fighting wholly for the Moderns in the quarrel then raging, and both respected the Ancients. The next Frenchman of importance to us, may be counted, on the whole, as a defender, though a very reasonable defender, of the Ancients. The *Réflexions Critiques sur*

---

[1] *Œuvres Diverses*, VI. 207, 210, 215, 221. Note that Saintsbury says of this part of the *Digressions*, "Here he becomes scientific, and therefore necessarily ceases to be of importance in literature". *Hist. of Crit.*, II. 506. Cf. his treatment of de Staël, III. 101—102.

la Poesie et sur la Peinture of Abbé Du Bos did not appear until 1719, but it went through seven editions before 1770, and was translated into English in 1748. Lombard says that slowly and confusedly a new aesthetic emerged from the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, and that in reality the development of the modern historical and comparative point of view can be traced directly back to the Quarrel and to the defenders of the Ancients.[1] The same writer points out that Du Bos attempted to give a scientific answer to the question that had proved so embarrassing to the defenders of the Ancients, the question as to whether humanity is progressing or not, by showing that neither Perrault nor Madame Dacier was right, but that the course of humanity rises and falls, re-arises and re-falls. Du Bos expressed this idea as early as 1695 in a letter to Bayle. Between that date and 1619 he deserted Cartesianism and became a follower of Locke and the English philosophy. To explain the rise and fall of humanity he worked out his theory of climate, expressed it first in 1705, again in 1709, and finally with great fullness in 1719 in the *Réflexions Critiques*.[2]

Du Bos says in the *Avertissement*, "I am looking for the cause which is able to make some periods so productive and others so sterile in celebrated artists."[3] Almost all of the second volume is given up to this search for causes. The first few sections in the volume try to answer the question, "What is genius?" and the first sentence summarizes the whole discussion — "The sublime of poesie and of painting is to touch and to please" (I. 1). This

[1] *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes; l'Abbé Du Bos,* p. 23.
[2] Lombard, work cited, p. 36 ff.
[3] *Réflexions* I. i.

definition builds the foundation for his doctrine that it is no longer necessary to obey authorities, whether Aristotle or Bossu; for if the one test of genius is the appeal to the feelings, then sentiment, and not reason, is the sole judge and neither reason nor authority have any rights in the case (II. 538). This is, of course, only the doctrine of taste, the "je ne sais quoi," of those who, willingly or unwillingly, found a grace beyond the rules.[1] Du Bos later turns the doctrine of sentiment with great success in favor of the Ancients.[2]

Du Bos gives up two hundred pages, however, to his main task, an exposition of the causes why genius appears at certain times and in certain countries and at other times does not. A summary is unfair to him, for his exposition is made clear by a wealth of illustration, but briefly he finds the controlling influences on the development of genius are both moral and physical. Genius depends originally upon the happy constitution of the brain; but the brain is strongly influenced by qualities of the air and natural environment, influences more or less stimulating or soothing. These natural influences direct the development of the national spirit or genius and so also help to control the moral influences, government, religion, and so on, exercised upon individual genius, and retarding or encouraging its development (II. 320 ff.).

One can hardly say that Saint-Évremond or Fontenelle got anything from their English contemporaries, but Du Bos was directly influenced by Locke, Wotton and Addison. He himself was quoted by later English critics, like Brown and the Wartons. We can probably say safely, with

---

[1] Cf. Spingarn, *Crit. Essays,* I. c.

[2] Cf. the last sections of Vol. II.

Lombard[1], that Du Bos influenced all contemporary and succeeding critics, whether they cite him or not; the unusual number of editions of his *Réflexions* would alone show his importance.

6. Historical Theory and Practice.

It is proper here to mention the writers who may have helped toward the development of the historical view in criticism by works, either in theory or in practice, contributing to the growth of the genetic conception of history proper. Only one work before the eighteenth century is discussed at any length by the authorities.[2] Jean Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* appeared in 1566, and his *De republica* in 1576. Flint says that Bodin aimed at a real explanation of events through two classes of influences, climate and political causes, but that in stating the influence of climate he had been preceded by Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Polybius and Galen.[3] Bodin probably had little if any direct influence on English criticism, though he is mentioned by Sidney[4] and Harvey[5] and twice by Bolton.[6]

---

[1] Work cited, p. 44.

[2] Cf. for bibliographical references on various sixteenth century treatises on the writing of history, Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, I. 238—239. Cf. further for the influence of the Italians on English historical writers, Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, pp. 308—313.

[3] *History of the Philosophy of History*, p. 197. Cf. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode*, p. 194ff.

[4] Letter to his brother Robert, Collins' reprint of Arber's *Critical Essays and Literary Fragments*, p. 6.

[5] Smith, *Eliz. Crit. Essays*, II. 281.

[6] Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, I. 87, 93.

Vico did his first work practically at the same time as Du Bos. Bernheim names him, along with Bodin, as one of the two real prophets of the new genetic conception of history.[1] Flint points out the strong influence of Bacon on Vico.[2] Vico first gave utterance to his views in a university lecture in 1719. In 1720 and 1721 appeared his essays on the unity and constancy of jurisprudence, and in supplementary notes to these in 1722 he first expressed his anticipation of the Wolfian and other later views on Homer. In 1725 the first edition of his *Principles of a New Science* appeared, in which he tries to get at "the common nature of nations, in which all knowledge, science, art, religion, morality, political and juridical systems, are originated and developed."[3] In the second edition of the *New Science* in 1730, he gave a whole book to the development of his theories about Homer. Flint declares that Vico anticipated every general position maintained by Wolf, and Hermann's and Lachmann's hypotheses as well.[4]

Though Vico seems to have had no immediate influence in England, certain Frenchmen, contemporaries of his, did have such an influence. Lenglet du Fresnoy's *Methode pour étudier l'histoire* was published in 1713. Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* in 1734 was "the first work in which a sustained and comprehensive attempt was made to show how the events and course of history have been determined by general physical and moral

---

[1] Bernheim, work cited, p. 641.
[2] *Vico*, 31, 33.
[3] Flint, *Vico*, p. 35.
[4] *Vico*, 176.

causes".[1] His famous *L'esprit des lois* in 1748 was, of course, known everywhere; but the five books of this work on the connection between the laws and other results of man's social life and such natural forces as temperature, soil and food, Flint says had been fully anticipated by Bodin[2], and Du Bos had applied the same methods to the study of literature nearly thirty years before. After Montesquieu's works came Turgot's *Discours sur les progrès successifs de l'esprit humain* in 1750, and in 1756 Voltaire's *Essai sur l'histoire generale et sur les moeurs et l'esprit des Nations depuis Charlemagne jusqu'a nos jours.* In 1765 Voltaire first used the phrase "*La Philosophie de l'Histoire*", though he did not use it in our sense and our modern idea was first expounded completely by Herder in 1784. Nevertheless Montesquieu, Turgot and Voltaire gave great impetus to the philosophical study of history. Their influence was felt at once in England, while two of them, at least, Montesquieu and Voltaire, had themselves been influenced by the English.

The background of historical theory in English itself is comparatively slight. Such men as Bacon, Bolton, Hume and Gibbon, because of their more intimate connection with criticism, will be noticed in their proper places in the chapters to follow. Only one man of any renown need be considered here, and that is Lord Bolingbroke. His *Letters on the Study and Use of History* were not published until 1752, but they were privately printed before his death in 1751 and the first one is dated 1735. They were written during his exile in France and only one year later than Montesquieu's book on the grandeur

---

[1] Flint, *Hist. of the Philos. of Hist.*, p. 263.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

and the decadence of the Romans; but they preceded in composition the much more significant work in historical theory just discussed, the three books of Montesquieu, Turgot and Voltaire.

The true purpose of the study of history, Bolingbroke says in the first *Letter*, is neither to furnish mere personal amusement, a fault common in England, nor to acquire material for conversational and rhetorical display, a common fault in France. Neither is the purpose of such study merely to find out what is historical fact. He has little patience with those scholars who are content to do no more than collect, compile and sift historical material.[1] History is rather to be of positive and practical use to man. Its "true and proper object . . . is a constant improvement in private and in public virtue"—it is "philosophy teaching by examples" (p. 1). History is a necessity to those who have to do with government, to the statesman and the citizen, because the experience of the past teaches them to judge the present and the future. Moreover, history has a profound ethical and cultural value for the individual, because it "serves to purge the mind of those national partialities and prejudices"—"that ridiculous and hurtful vanity by which the people of each country are apt to prefer themselves to those of every other, and to make their own customs and manners and opinions the standards of right and wrong, of true and false" (p. 9—10) —an excellent statement on historical tolerance.

These are the ends of the study of history, as Bolingbroke conceives them, a conception in harmony with the growing spirit of his age, that nothing can justify its existence which is not useful to man, and really no more

[1] *Letters on the Study and Use of History,* pp. 1—3.

than a re-phrasing and application to history of the Horatian maxim of the ends of poetry—to delight and to teach. To secure these ends, history must be composed in accordance with right methods. It must appeal not only to the imagination but also to the reason and the judgment. He summarizes his ideal of method for "authentic histories" in a single sentence—"we shall find many a complete series of events, preceded by a deduction of their immediate and remote causes, related in their full extent, and accompanied with such a detail of circumstances and characters, as may transport the attentive reader back to the very time, make him a party to the councils, and an actor in the whole scene of affairs" (p. 36).

It would be hard to overestimate the relative importance of such an ideal for historical method—a combination of picturesque compelling narrative with a philosophical analysis of causes—when given forth by a man who bulked so large in the eyes of his time as Bolingbroke. It was a sign—both effect and cause—of one of the most important intellectual movements in the eighteenth century—the awakening interest in history. Its absolute value is probably much less.[1] Bolingbroke sneers at investigators into original sources—the same class of men as those who in our own day think themselves alone entitled to be called historians. He allows some virtue to the harmless drudges "who make fair copies of foul manuscripts", because they "enable others to study with greater ease"; but as for men "of the first rank in learning, and to whom the whole tribe of scholars bow with reverence", men like Scaliger

[1] Cf. Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, II. 173—175; Grant, *English Historians*, pp. xxvii—xxxi.

and Usher, he avows "a thorough contempt for the whole business of these learned lives". His quarrel with them is two-fold, first, that they bend their facts to fit a system imposed from without, and, second, that they fail to serve the true ends of history. As for himself he would rather commit any number of blunders in chronology, "than sacrifice half my life to collect all the learned lumber that fills the head of an antiquary". Moreover, he has the naive idea that these scholarly investigators have already collected all the possible materials of history, and all that is needed now is the correct writing up of this material.[1] It is true, also, that his conception of historical causation is limited in scope. It does not rise to the plane of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws.* Indeed, like other English leaders in eighteenth century thought, Hume and Adam Smith[2], for example, Bolingbroke in general, refused to consider the influence of environment, especially physical environment, upon historical development. The only work on historical methods he mentions specially is "the method of Bodin, a man famous in his time"; yet he mentions it only to condemn it, especially "a tedious fifth chapter, wherein he accounts for the characters of nations according to their positions on the globe".[3] He saw with great clearness the part played in history by the motives, the passions, the personal interests and ambitions of princes, ministers, and party leaders; conscious intrigue, diplomacy, as historical forces, would appeal most to a practical politician like Bolingbroke or to the school of thinkers and

---

[1] Cf. work cited, pp. 2 and 3.

[2] Cf. below. Cf. also Patten, *The Development of English Thought*, pp. 228—231.

[3] Work cited, p. 21; and cf. p. 34.

moralists to which he and his leading contemporaries belonged, men who believed that the principles of common human nature, a contagion of manners and a clash of individual human wills ought to be sufficient to account for everything human.[1]

Yet Leslie Stephen goes too far when he asserts that Bolingbroke "characteristically begins by depriving himself of the necessary materials for researches", that he "manages with curious infelicity to repudiate the true historical method before it has come into being", and that he failed to have "any clear conception of the unity and continuity of history".[2] Judged in the light of our modern conception of historical methods and purposes Bolingbroke's achievement is not so great, but relatively and historically it is decidedly important. He insists on a critical examination of authorities and sources (p. 29—32). He sees the special value of a study of modern history (pp. 49—51), and recommends the study of the "materia historica" for such modern history—memorials, collections of public acts and monuments, of private letters, and of treaties, and even oral tradition. His statement of causes and his understanding of the connection between events is not wholly superficial, a matter of "the back stairs theory of politics", as Stephen asserts.[3] In his sketch of European history from 1659 to 1688 *(Letter VII.)* Bolingbroke accounts for the success of France by a careful analysis of the personalities of Louis XIV and his great ministers, and by a definite citation of the influence of "the soil, the climate, the situation of France, the ingenuity, the

---

[1] Cf. Patten, work cited, p. 227 ff.

[2] Work cited, II. 173—175.

[3] Work cited, II. 174.

industry, the vivacity of her inhabitants" (p. 69). He marked out the paths which eighteenth century history was to take.[1] Few men of his time influenced more men in more directions. He was the mentor of Pope. Burke and the Pitts, father and son, got something of their eloquence and part of their political inspiration from him. Voltaire was glad to acknowledge his indebtedness to his great English friend. Hume and Gibbon show his influence not only in style and tone and ideas but also in actual historical method.

Bolingbroke himself regrets the little accomplished in the actual writing of history in England as compared with what had been accomplished on the continent (p. 57). Yet a number of influences since the beginning of the sixteenth century had been making for the development of historical writing of a higher class. The Renaissance divorced philosophy from theology. Bishop Creighton declares that the growth of national feeling is the most distinctive mark separating historically the modern world from the medieval.[2] The Reformation meant the assertion of nationality against the medieval conception of a European commonwealth. National consciousness and pride in national achievement in Elizabethan times found expression chiefly in historical chronicles in both prose and poetry and in the great historical drama. The character of the struggle between King and Parliament in the Civil war was a direct incentive to the study of the national past as a practical means of proving political contentions. The questions of the Revolution of 1688 still further emphasized the necessity for historical study. The dis-

---

[1] Cf. Grant, work cited, p. 28.

[2] Introductory note to the *Cambridge Modern History*, I. 2.

cussion of the principles of government entered the domain of philosophy in the work of Hobbes and Locke, and the movement they represented was bound to call out a careful investigation of the past. The prevailing rationalistic philosophy at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century tended to encourage the study of cause and effect in the sequence of events. The skeptical and deistic movements in the early eighteenth century contributed both negatively and positively to historical conceptions.[1] The rise of science through the influence of such men as Bacon and the founders of the Royal Society lent its aid to the inductive study of all kinds of facts and to the conception of the continuity of natural law. Even the movement toward plainness, simplicity and truth in literary style at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century had a helpful reaction on the tone and spirit of historical writing. By the middle of the eighteenth century the cumulative effect of all these forces had prepared the way for the great triumvirate, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon.[2]

In the meantime the actual collection of historical materials and the writing of history increased with the demand. The masses of the collections began in the age of Elizabeth. The Cotton and the Bodleian libraries were founded then. Selden and other antiquaries continued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the work begun by Camden in the sixteenth century. Multiplying collec-

---

[1] Cf. Stephen, work cited, I. 166—168, 191—193, 263—271 (Middleton).

[2] Cf. Flint's *History of the Philosophy of History*, pp. 28—42, for a discussion of the forces influential on the growth of historical theory and practice.

tions of various kinds finally resulted in the foundation of the British Museum in 1753. Historical writing itself increased rather slowly in the seventeenth century. The contemporary and autobiographical nature of a good deal of the seventeenth century history is well illustrated in its two best known works, Lord Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion,* and Bishop Burnet's *History of My Own Times.* Both these works illustrate another interesting fact — the great increase in the publication of historical works beginning with 1700. The first part of Clarendon's history was not published until 1704 and the first volume of Bishop Burnet's not until 1724, though the first volume of Burnet's well known *History of the Reformation* appeared in 1681. The bibliographical sections of the *Cambridge Modern History* show that there was a sudden outburst of historical publications after 1700—histories of single reigns and single periods, memoirs, state documents, works relating to the reign of Elizabeth, the Civil War, the Revolution, the wars of the Pretenders, and even the American colonies. The titles of these works prove that history in our modern sense arose out of partisanship. The partisan tone still prevailed in the first great historical work of the century, Hume's *History of England* (Vol. I, 1754). Robertson's *History of Scotland* appeared in 1759. The first volume of Gibbon's *Rome* did not appear until 1776, but the researches on which it was based were begun at least ten years before. Gibbon was the only one of the three historians whose work was based on adequate research and therefore his history is the only one that has survived as an authority. Though their subjects and their personalities were so different, all three historians were men of their century. In spite of partisanship they had a critical

regard for the truth. Though there is failure to see and to recognize some of the deeper forces operating in history, yet they tried to show the relation between events and there is a degree of social and political philosophy underlying the work of all three. They were all influenced by the chief writers of their times on historical theory, Bolingbroke, Montesquieu, and Voltaire[1], and their work was done or well begun by 1770, the date ending the period considered in this study of the historical point of view in literary criticism.

That the development in historical theory and practice just discussed was a necessary forerunner or accompaniment of the development in the application of the historical point of view in literary criticism, is a statement that needs only to be made to be accepted. It is only with the knowledge of that historical environment which history alone can give that such a point of view can be applied to literature at all. At the same time history itself can furnish the best examples of the application of the genetic method, while historical theory furnishes those precepts as to aims and methods most easily transferred to the field of literary study. The great increase of collected historical material from 1570 to 1770, the growth of historical writing as an art based on philosophical principles, and the increased discussion of these principles, were, then, all of direct importance in the development of the historical point of view in literary criticism, because they furnished necessary knowledge, examples and precepts.

---

[1] Cf. on the place of Hume, Robertson and Gibbon in the development of historiography, Grant, work cited, pp. xxxi—xxxvi, and Stephen, work cited, I. 57—58.

7. Summary.

I have attempted so far to clear the ground for the study of the English critical documents themselves. I have stated my purpose and pointed out the incentive to such a study because of the comparatively slight treatment the subject has received by the authorities on English criticism. I have tried to make clear why the limits of my study were placed at 1770, to discriminate between the different points of view in literary criticism, to show what is meant by the historical point of view, to sketch the background of influential foreign critical utterances, during the period considered, and to take a glance at the development of theory and practice in history proper which accompanied the growth of the historical point of view in literary criticism.

This introductory discussion ought to have made clear that in the three following chapters, taking up in order Elizabethan Criticism, Seventeenth Century Criticism and Eighteenth Century Criticism before 1770, what must be looked for is a recognition, directly, or indirectly, of some phase of a "relative aesthetic varying from age to age, from country to country".[1] Such a recognition may take the form of a denial of dogmatism, traditional or rationalistic, because aesthetic principles must vary from country to country, from age to age. Such criticism may insist on the right of national individuality in art, a right which will mean not merely a patriotic appreciation of the critic's own national literature, but also an increased tolerance for the literary art of other nations. It may demand that no standards of a past age shall rule the literature of the

[1] Cf. above, p. 18.

critic's own age, but this demand may be accompanied by a fuller and more sympathetic understanding of the literature of past ages. These various phases of the expression of such a relative aesthetic will be based on an implicit or more or less consciously expressed recognition of the unity and the continuity of national and community life, a recognition of the interwoven historical forces influencing literature, a recognition of the necessity of taking such forces into account in passing judgment upon a piece of literature or in arriving at any true appreciation of its worth.

II. Elizabethan Criticism.[1]

1. Origin of Elizabethan Criticism and General Grouping of the Critics.

Elizabethan Criticism is almost wholly the result of attacks on English poetry by reformers and of answers to these attacks.[2] The attack was two-fold: first, on moral grounds, against the immoral tendencies in the contemporary acted drama, and against the same tendencies in the still popular native medieval romances and in contemporary lyric poetry, and finally against foreign influences, especially Italian, in poetry and romance; and, second, on literary grounds, against the prevailing verse forms in English poetry and impure style in the language.

The moral attack, so far as those who wrote wholly from the moral standpoint are concerned, was against various kinds of public entertainers and entertainments; poetry and drama were not the only offenders.[3] In regard to poetry, part of their attack was at once taken over by the humanists and used for their own purposes. We are not concerned with the moral attack when made wholly

---

[1] Unless otherwise noted, the references to critical texts will be to those found in Gregory Smith's *Elizabethan Critical Essays.*

[2] Cf. Smith, I. xiv ff., and Spingarn, *Lit. Crit. in the Ren.*, p. 257.

[3] Cf. titles of reforming pamphlets to 1587, Smith, I. 61—63.

by moralists; it is only when this becomes part of the humanist propaganda, or inspires the defense of poetry, that a student of criticism becomes interested. It must be remembered that Ascham, More and the earlier men of the New Learning were all reformers, that they were reformers in church and state as well as in literature; but their whole point of view was aristocratic. They wished to reform from above downward; they wanted no cataclysmic revolution, but desired the truth gradually to permeate the unleavened mass below, if that were possible, through the efforts of the divinely appointed leaders above. They and their later followers were in earnest in their denunciation of the corrupt moral elements in literature. Smith has pointed out, however, that the foes of poetry and the defenders did not meet on exactly common ground (I. xx). The Puritans, in the main, were men of the people and were thinking only of popular literature and popular stage entertainments. The defenders were university men, scholars and courtiers, who, on the whole, despised the popular literature and were perfectly willing to grant its viciousness and even to out-Herod Herod in its denunciation. Their defense, then, is based on the value of a different kind of poetry from that the Puritans had in mind. This is one part of the explanation why, in general, Elizabethan critics failed to discuss adequately the great national literature then beginning to spring up around them. Another reason for this failure is that the better national literature was still to be produced when the mass of Elizabethan criticism was written, and the larger body of popular literature open to discussion when the Elizabethan critics began to write deserved the contempt they gave it.

The grouping of the Elizabethan critics under the different banners shows that sometimes a man must be counted on both sides. Ascham began the moral attack as a humanist in 1570. He was followed by the great protagonist of the Puritans, Gosson. Later critics, like Whetstone, Meres and Vaughan, follow up the moral attack in part, while the defenders of poetry, like Sidney, Puttenham and Harrington, were, in a degree, sympathetic toward the moral ideals of the Puritans. In fact, the whole list of defenders, Lodge, Sidney, Stanyhurst, Webbe, Puttenham, Nash, Harrington, use the moral value of poetry as one of their arguments. Even Vaughan, who condemns stage plays, argues in behalf "Of Poetry and of the excellency there of" (II. 309), while Meres who had black-listed the medieval romances, believed that there are "many things very profitable to be known" in poetry (II. 325 f.).

The literary attack also had sufficient reason for its beginning. The early reformers were in favor of the use of English as against Latin, but they realized that English as a language needed to set its house in order. Latinists and humanists as they were, they fought against ink-horn terms of whatever origin, whether French-English, English Italianated or Latin.[1] The Elizabethans believed in the powers and possibilities of their language, and worked patriotically to improve it. Saintsbury has pointed out why the second literary reform, the attempt to make over English prosody, came into being.[2] No one of the three forms in

---

[1] Cf. Wilson's *Art of Rhetorique* (1553) in Saintsbury's *Loci Critici*, pp. 89—90; also, Ascham's *Scholemaster* (Arber), pp. 111—112; and Gascoigne, I. 51.

[2] *Hist. of Crit.*, II. 157—160. Cf. Schelling's *Poetic and Verse Criticism*, p. 4 ff.

use then—the Chaucerian, the Alliterative and the Italianated, as Saintsbury calls them—could be considered by their performances in Ascham's time as satisfactory; and hence naturally arose a movement—coming first from St. John's College, Cambridge—to put matters right in the only way the scholars of the New Learning could conceive of, by imitating classical meters. This attack of the critics was inevitable; and the defense against the remedy proposed culminated in the one critical work where the historical point of view was given any adequate expression in the Elizabethan period, Daniel's *Defence of Ryme.*

The movement for the application of classical principles to English poetry was led by Ascham and numbered among its adherents on the various subjects included —classical measures *vs.* rhyme, and the unities and decorum in the drama—Ascham himself, Whetstone, Spenser, Harvey, "E. K.", Stanyhurst, Sidney, Webbe, and Campion.[1] The defenders of the national tradition in poetry —the battle over the drama was to be fought out later— included, first, Gascoigne and King James, who were for the defense by implication, rather than by explicit statement. The former's *Certayne Notes of Instruction* and the latter's *Reulis and Cautelis* assumed that the system inherited from Chaucer, as modified by Surrey and Wyatt after their Italian models, was the correct system for English verse. Sidney believed that English was "fit for both sorts" of versifying.[2] Puttenham dallied with classical

---

[1] Cf. also the extract from the unknown author of the "Preservation of King Henry the VII", Smith, I. 377—8, and Blenerhasset's *Induction*, Schelling, p. 23f.

[2] I. 204—205. But Spenser claimed that Sidney was responsible for perfecting Drant's scheme (I. 99).

verse forms, but he had no doubt of the superiority of the traditional English verse forms; the use of classical measures he considered purely an academic question (II. 134). Nash ridiculed "Hexameter" Harvey's attempts, but Harvey himself could not go so far as to accept the complete classical "Dranting" of English verse.[1] Whether the "Areopagus" was wholly in earnest or not in its attempt to banish rhyme and the national system of verse, is open to doubt.[2] There are at least grounds for suspicion that Sidney and Spenser and Dyer were not much more serious than was that other courtier, Puttenham, when he was toying with classical measures. The tone of the Spenser-Harvey letters is strangely light for serious reformers (I. 87—126), and Spenser was earnestly at work all the time on the "Faerye Queene" and other English verses. Campion appears to have been in earnest, temporarily, at least, little as we can conceive of it in connection with his own poetry; but neither he, nor Stanyhurst, nor Harvey, nor even Ascham himself, believed that the prosodic rules of one language could be applied wholly to another. We can at least be grateful for the fad, if it was no more than that among the later men, for it gave Daniel the occasion he needed for the defense of the national tradition.

2. Possibilities for the Period.

Even a cursory reading of Elizabethan criticism will make it evident that the larger number of the critics were

---

[1] Cf. I. 119, 121; II. 272.

[2] Cf. Maynadier, *The Areopagus of Sidney and Spenser*, *Mod. Lang. Rev.* IV. 289—301. For the opposite view, see Fletcher, *Areopagus and Pléiade*, *Jour. Eng. & Germ. Phil.* II. 429—453.

almost wholly without the true historical sense and point of view. It could hardly be expected that they could have it. It had as yet been expressed neither in criticism nor in history itself. Bodin seemed to be practically unknown. The method of the defense of poetry against the Puritan attack was outlined in advance in the attack itself. The opponents of the Puritans and still more the aristocracy of birth and learning for whom they really wrote, would listen to only one kind of defence. Along with their direct onslaught on the immorality of poetry as everybody knew it, the Puritans used the argument of authority and piled up testimony of supposedly expert witnesses like the church fathers and Plato. The defenders had to retort by piling up more authority, showing the long descent of poetry, its early sacred character, its allegorical teaching power, the favor of the great, etc. It hardly need be said that the argument from authority is not in keeping with the historical point of view. The better chance to use the historical method came with the opportunity to defend the national literary tradition, but most of the critics, Daniel excepted, were either on the other side or devoted their strength to answering the Puritan attack. The earlier reformers in matters literary could not well be otherwise than classical in intention. They felt that the language and its poetic forms must be subjected to the discipline of art, and the only literary art they knew or could respect was found in the classics. As has been pointed out[1], no one before Campion and Daniel could well have written with any full realization that the national tradition could justify itself in practice, for no other important Elizabethan

---

[1] *Supra*, p. 38.

critic at the time of writing had seen the great achievements of Shakespeare and his greater contemporaries.[1]

As has been already suggested, any attempt at a careful classification of the Elizabethan critics is bound to meet with difficulties. The authorities on the history of criticism do not agree on the matter. Hamelius, for example, has only two large periods in the whole sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first reaches to the Commonwealth and this he divides into two parts, Renaissance criticism before Jonson, and Jonson's foundation of the Neo-classic school.[2] Gayley and Scott have only one period from Ascham to Bacon, a period they characterize as "Chiefly Theoretical and Largely Academic".[3] Spingarn in his *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* offers a more minute division. The first, down to and including Ascham, is devoted to the "purely rhetorical study of literature". The second, from Gascoigne to the *Defenses*, is a period of classification and of metrical studies. The third, from Sidney to Daniel, is the period of philosophical and apologetic criticism (pp. 254 ff.). Spingarn's division is in a broad way chronological, and in a general way corresponds to the change in critical thought. Yet there are so many cross-currents that even so simple and broad a classification as this is likely to suffer from inconsistencies. The easiest way for a further discussion of Elizabethan criticism in this study is to take the various critics up chronologically and to show not only the cross currents in each individual but also what development there may be in time sequence.

---

[1] Cf. for this paragraph, Smith, I. xiv—xvi, and Spingarn, *Lit. Crit. in Ren.*, pp. 296—310.

[2] *Die Kritik in der Eng. Lit.*, p. 7 ff.

[3] *Lit. Crit.*, pp. 389 ff.

Two things in the following examination of the different Elizabethan critics may call for explanation. The first of these is that some space is given up to a negative task, to a statement of critical utterances opposed to the historical point of view. Such a procedure can justify itself only because the Elizabethans wrought in a time of beginnings, in the formative period, and while their absolute value as a group is considerably less than that of later critics, their relative importance is increased because they do represent this period of origins. Hence all that they said, against as well as for the historical point of view, deserves some notice. The carrying out of this principle involves, then, the devotion of more space to the Elizabethan critics than as a group, always excepting Daniel, they can possibly deserve intrinsically.

3. Chronological Discussion of Individual Critics.

Ascham, the first important Elizabethan critic in point of time, is in many ways typical of the period. The *Scholemaster* (1570) contains much material valuable to the student of criticism. He insists, in the first place, that if anything good is to be found in any of the modern languages, or even in Latin, "Cicero onelie excepted, . . . it is either lerned, borrowed, or stolne, from those worthy wittes of Athens".[1] God's wise providence destroyed their contemporaries, but saved Plato, Aristotle and Tullie to serve as models to after times, and any man who will love and follow them will be "learned, wise and also an honest man", provided he adds the Bible.[2] He believes that excellence in a language goes with good moral con-

[1] *Scholemaster* (Arber), p. 60. — [2] I. 7; cf. pp. 22, 29.

duct in the nation (pp. 6, 27), but such perfection in language cannot last longer than a century, "for no perfection is durable" (p. 26)—a principle that ought to have suggested the inconsistency of setting up any absolute standard. His well known attack on "rude beggerly ryming, brought first into Italie by *Gothes* and *Hunnes*, whan all good verses and all good learning to were destroyed by them, and after caryd into France and Germanie, and at last receyued into England" (pp. 29—35), contains in this sentence the view, still orthodox in the eighteenth century, that learning and art and civilization are always consciously destroyed, or imported or fostered, as the case may be. He has no conception of natural and more or less unconscious growth of the arts. His system of imitation is to be a conscious art, and the very word "art" in literary criticism comes to mean for the next two hundred years this deliberate study and imitation of models and conscious application of rules. Ascham weakens his case by acknowledging the force of "tyme and custome" in sanctifying rhyme and that the very nature of the English tongue makes it practically impossible to use all the classical measures (p. 30). His standard is wholly aristocratic—the author should rather satisfy one learned man than please a multitude (p. 31). His hatred of both medieval and Italian romances is not wholly from the Puritan and Protestant standpoint, though he attributes the introduction of Italian romances to "secrete Papistes" and had a due Protestant contempt for "idle Monkes and wanton Chanons"; as a matter of fact, he had the classicist's contempt for the ignorance and formlessness of medieval literature and for the lawlessness of Italian romance, what we now call its romantic art, a

contempt taught him, directly or indirectly, by the orthodox Italian humanists.[1] The only things in Ascham that might be mentioned as tending toward the historical point of view are his intense patriotism, and his quotation from Cheke, analyzing Sallust's style and accounting for its likeness to the style of Thucydides and its difference from the styles of Caesar and Cicero partly through the influence of environment (pp. 40—43). This last is confessedly not his own, and so Ascham can well stand as the father of dogmatic criticism.

Some of the critics from Ascham to Daniel deserve but passing notice. In Gascoigne's *Certayne Notes of Instruction* (1575), meant, as I have suggested[2], to be merely a practical manual, there is nothing to interest us, except his reverence for Chaucer (I. 47, 50, 56). Blenerhasset's appeal against the "Gotish" kind of rhyming and for "Roman verse" (1577) is merely an early echo of Ascham.[3] Whetstone's Dedication to *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) is noteworthy only for its full statement of the classical principle of decorum. He attacks the lewdness of the French and Italian drama and makes the first effective statement of the irregularity of the English drama (I. 58—60). Sidney follows him in this and later the rationalists, Davenant, Hobbes, Rymer and others, develop his doctrine of decorum. Lodge had the honor of writing in 1579 the first *Defence of Poetry,* a chaotic piece, but it blocked out the lines of the later "Defences". Lodge cites his authorities wholly from the classics, though Chaucer is used once as an example (I. 69), and the only

---

[1] Smith, I. xxi; cf. Spingarn, *Lit. Crit. in the Ren.,* pp. 254—255.

[2] *Supra,* p. 40. — [3] Schelling, pp. 23—24.

faint intimation of the historical standpoint, is a "suppose" that English actors "drew ther plaies and fourme of garments" from the Romans (I. 83). "E. K's." *Epistle Dedicatory to the Shepheards Calendar* (1579), addressed in flattering terms to Harvey, praises Chaucer and commends Spenser for decorum, use of old words and following the example of the "most ancient Poetes", and condemns with due scholarly and courtier-like contempt the "rakehellye route of our ragged rymers" (I. 128—131).

Up to the Spenser-Harvey correspondence (1579—1580), then, there is practically no trace of the historical point of view. This whole correspondence shows that Harvey is far from deserving the conventional sneers bestowed upon him for his supposed pedantry. The probability is that literary historians and biographers have felt it necessary to declare that the two amiable and popular young poets, Sidney and Spenser, were led astray by Harvey, and have so declared without proper investigation.[1] We do not have the least evidence that Drant's rules or practice could have "fired Harvey to be a reformer", as Smith suggests (I. 1). In the first letter Spenser declares he has been drawn to the faction of Sidney and Dyer, in their "surceasing and silence of balde Rymers . . . insteade whereof, they haue, by the authoritie of their whole Senate, prescribed certaine Laws and rules of Quantities of English Sillables for English Verse", and that he is already using Drant's rules to judge attempts at classical verse (I. 89—90). In answer Harvey refuses to accept Drant's rules as authority because "My selfe neither sawe them, nor heard of them before" (p. 97). Then Spenser asks why English cannot make accent depend upon quan-

[1] Cf. Schelling, *Poetic and Verse Criticism,* pp. 24—28.

tity as well as Greek and asserts that Sidney worked over and expanded Drant's rules (p. 98). Harvey's answer says he does not dare lay down rules (pp. 102—103), and that Spenser should not dare to change the accent against "generall receyued Custome", for "the Latin is no rule for us" (pp. 117—118). It is a classicist with decidedly good sense who asserts: "We are not to go a little farther, either for the *Prosody* or the *Orthography* . . . then we are licenced and authorized by the ordinarie use, and custome, and proprietie, and Idiome, and, as it were, Maiestie of our speach: which I accounte the only infallible and soueraigne Rule of all Rules" (p. 119). He further declares: "It is the vulgare and naturall Mother *Prosodye*, that alone worketh the feate, as the onely supreame Foundresse and Reformer of Position, Dipthong, Orthographie, or whatsoever else: whose Affirmatives are nothing worth, if she once conclude the Negative", and he finally refuses to give any "Artificial Rules and Precepts" (pp. 121—122). Though in his defense against Greene Harvey says, "let me rather be epitaphed, The Inventor of the English Hexameter", he means, than be the author of Greene's works (II. 230—231); this "epitaph" is part of a defense, and those who quote it generally misrepresent Harvey. The passages above make it evident that a man who saw so clearly the foolishness of Sidney's and Spenser's "Dranting"[1] and who stated such a "Rule of Rules" was well on the way, in this particular, at least, toward the historical standpoint. It must be confessed that he never wholly reached it.

Stanyhurst's *Dedication* and *Preface* to his *Æneid* (1582) and his translation itself, show that he followed

[1] Harvey condemns "Dranting" again in 1593. See II. 272.

Harvey's principles in verse reform rather than Drant's and Sidney's. He also approaches the historical standpoint in his statement of fundamental principles, and shows Harvey's liberality in disdaining to make rules for others. He says definitely that he was trying to carry out Ascham's ideas.[1] But he knows that Latin quantity is no exact rule for English and gets at the principle that would destroy any rigid classical verse scheme for English when he says, "For the final eend of a verse is too please thee eare". Then on the same page he attacks "these grammatical Precisians" with the notable statement that, "as every countrye hath his peculiar law, so they permit euerye language too vse his particular loore" (I. 141—142). His refusal to make rules for others shows the characteristic open-mindedness of some of the Elizabethan classicists[2], while the sentence just quoted contains the gist of Daniel's argument from the historical point of view.

Sidney's *Apologie* (1581—1583) deserves its fame for what Schelling calls "its lofty ideality"[3]; for us it does not present much. Sidney soon deserted "Dranting". In the *Apologie* he devotes but two paragraphs to the two kinds of versifying, and arrives at the patriotic but reasoned conclusion that, "Truely the English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts" (I. 204—205); and then he proceeds to show why. On the other technical problem, so widely discussed in the next two centuries, the question of the dramatic unities, Sidney ranges himself on the side of "Aristotle's precept and common reason",[4] and in this phrase sums up the text for the

[1] I. 137. Harvey, too, mentions Ascham with respect: cf. I. 102, 118, 120. — [2] Cf. Smith, I. xxxix—xl.

[3] Work cited, p. 76. — [4] p. 197; cf. 196—201.

future discussion. This is the only section of the *Apologie* where Sidney shows himself an out-and-out classicist, but that he should follow Whetstone in condemning the English popular drama of 1581—1583, not yet emancipated from the formlessness of the miracle plays, is not inexcusable. Yet in his love for ballads (I. 178) and praise of romances (pp. 173, 179, 188), in his discussion of style and the English language (pp. 201—204), in his recognition of genius before "art" (p. 195), he is even more tolerant than the majority of his contemporaries. In one brief instance only does he use the historical method, and that is where he accounts for the nature of Pindar's poetry as the result of "the tyme and custome of the Greekes".[1]

In his *Schort Treatise* (1584) King James states in the *Preface* why he has written the treatise, when so many others have already written on the subject. His first reason is that Scotch is not English, and though English "is lykest to our language, yit we differ from thame in sindrie reulis of Poesie, as ye will find be experience" (I. 209) — a direct statement of difference in national standards. The chief reason for writing, however, is that the rules for Poesie must necessarily change with time— "lyke as the tyme is changeit sensyne, sa is the ordour of Poesie changeit", and he speaks optimistically of Poesie, "as being come to mannes age and perfectioun, quhair as then it was bot in the infancie and chyldheid" (I. 209). Moreover, he knows one must have genius before rules are worth anything (p. 210). The statement of his two reasons above is sufficient to rank him as the first English critic—I beg his pardon, for he is certainly Scotch!—to

[1] p. 179. Sidney preceded Chapman, Milton and others in praise of the Bible as literature (158).

bring definitely together two fundamental principles of the historical method: (1) that the literary standards of one nation cannot apply directly to the work of another; and (2) that in the same nation standards must vary from period to period. Still the *Treatise* that follows is only a re-hash of Gascoigne.

In the full title of Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), the second part—*Together with the Author's iudgment, touching the reformation of English Verse*—indicates where Webbe is likely to stand on the question of classical meters. He blames the English barbarousness in poetry upon the "cankered enmitie of curious custome" (I. 228). Still he offers a bit of alternative to his classical *Prosodia* for English—"where it would skant abyde the touch of theyr Rules" he is willing to establish new rules "by the naturall affectation of the speeche" (p. 229). Later he quotes Ascham on the origin of "this brutish Poetrie . . . this tinkerly verse which we call ryme" (p. 240). Yet the poor fellow "may not utterly dissalowe it, least I should seeme to call in question the iudgement of all our famous wryters, which haue wonne eternall prayse by theyr memorable workes compyled in that verse" (p. 266), and anyway English rhymes are better than any other! As a matter of fact Webbe has nothing but a naive working over of other men's material, and would hardly deserve the space above had he not himself given considerable space to brief and pretty crude appreciations of various English poets—his "simple judgment", as he rightly calls it (pp. 240—247).

There is nothing in the summary Smith gives of Fraunce's *Arcadian Rhetorike* (I. 303—306) (1588) to have us pause, and so we can pass on to the man Schelling

calls "Harvey's natural enemy"[1], Thomas Nash. Smith includes four selections from Nash — the *Preface* to *Menaphon* and the *Anatomie of Absurditie* (both 1589) in Volume I, and the *Preface* to *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) and *Strange Newes* (1592) in Volume II. Nash is, on the whole, distinctly for the Moderns, and for the more recent Moderns, as against the "Abbie-lubbers" and their Arthurian and other medieval romances (I. 323). He is quite sure of the superiority of the English poets from Chaucer to Spenser over all comers (pp. 318—320). He exploits the "extemporall vaine", the original genius, of his own school of University Wits, over "our greatest Art-masters deliberate thoughts" (p. 309), that is, he praises original genius at the expense of the rules long before Young. He pokes fun at Stanyhurst's "hexameter furie", and later, in his reply to Harvey, exposes the shallow reasoning of those who advocate the classical verse. "Hexamiter verse", he says, "I graunt to be a Gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English begger); yet this Clyme of ours he cannot thriue in . . . *Homer and Virgil, two valorous Authors*, yet were they never knighted, they wrote in Hexameter Verses: *Ergo, Chaucer* and *Spenser*, the *Homer* and *Virgil* of England, were farre ouerseene that they wrote not all their Poems in Hexamiter verses also. In many Countries veluet and Satten is a commoner weare than cloth amongst vs: Ergo, wee must leaue wearing of cloth, and goe euerie one in veluet and satten, because other Countries vse so . . . *Our english tongue is nothing too good, but* too bad *to imitate the Greeke and Latine*" (II. 240). Nash really believes in the national

[1] Work cited, p. 37.

tradition and in the new English literature and is less cumbered with the "Ancients" than any man we have met before.

Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) is large enough to be called a treatise. But we don't dare to call it that, since his aim was wholly popular—to make this Art vulgar "for all Englishmens use". "I write to the pleasure of a Lady [Elizabeth herself] . . . and neither to Priests nor to Prophets or Philosophers" (II. 25 and 193). In other words, Puttenham is writing for the public, for the same public Dryden addresses, for "society", and not for an aristocracy of scholars; his book was intentionally "fitter to please the Court than the schoole" (pp. 164—165). He has succeeded in writing a *vade mecum* for those who would "become good makers in the vulgar", or for those who would "iudge of other mens makings" (p. 165). The "arte" of his title means "a certaine order of rules prescribed by reason, and gathered by experience"; that is, he excludes authority and insists, therefore, that Poesie may be "a vulgar Art with vs as well as with the Greeks and Latines" (p. 5). On the vexed question of poetical measures, he is wholly in favor of accentual verse and rhyme. His argument in favor of rhyme is so explicit that it must have influenced Daniel. He cites the whole world, from the Hebrews and Chaldees to the American Indians and "the vary Canniball", to prove that "our maner of vulgar Poesie is more ancient then the artificiall of the Greeks and Latines, ours coming by instinct of nature, which was before Art or Observation, and used with the savage and vnciuill, who were before all science or ciuilitie" (p. 10—11). This whole chapter is worth reading, because it is not only one of Daniel's strongest

arguments, but also involves the material Brown worked on in 1764. Puttenham knew classical measures were merely "friuolous and rediculous", and that "custome" alone could fix any art of poetry (pp. 124—130). He explains the treatment of the heathen gods in ancient poetry by the character of the oriental princes in the likeness of whom they had been created (pp. 29—40). Puttenham is, then, sane and modern, and to a certain extent historical in his outlook.

Harrington's *Brief Apologie* (1591) is in three parts —he apologizes for poetry, for Ariosto and for his own translation. In the first he quotes Sidney and Puttenham and evidently follows them. The third we need not consider. In the second he tries Ariosto by the *Æneid* as a model and by the rules of Aristotle as an authority. But this subserviency to dogmatism is tempered somewhat. An answer to one objection of the "rules" is, "Methinks it is a sufficient defence to say, *Ariosto* doth it" (II. 217), that is, he sets up a modern against the ancients on the principle that good work needs no excuse from precedent. Again against those who reduce "all heroicall Poems vnto the methode of *Homer* and certain precepts of *Aristotle*", he replies, "for Homer I say that that which was commendable in him to write in that age, the times being changed, would be thought otherwise now" (pp. 215—216). That each author has the right to be judged on the merits of his own performance, and that standards change with the age, are principles which ought to rank Harrington high on the question of fixed external standards, but unfortunately most of his space is given up to a direct acknowledgment and application of dogmatic standards.

The next productions chronologically, Nash's essays in Smith's second volume, have been noticed above[1], and the same is true of all that concerns us in Harvey's later essays[2],—Foure Letters (1592), *Pierces Supererogation* and *A New Letter of Notable Contents* (1593). The next essay, Carew's *The Excellency of the English Tongue* (1593), asserts that English has gathered all the good qualities of all the other modern languages and escaped their faults (II. 292—243), a mark of the Elizabethan critical patriotism, but he gives more proof than Sidney did.[3] Yet Carew believes rules may be applied deductively, and he is not entirely in favor of establishing something "by nature or by Custome", or by the "antiquitye from our Elders and the universalitye of our neighbours" (p. 285), and hence could hardly accept reasoning like Puttenham's on rhyme.

Chapman's *Preface* to his *Iliad* and his *Dedication* to *Achilles Shield* (1598) are chiefly remarkable for his magnificent defense of Homer against "soule-blind" Scaliger's exaltation of Vergil at the expense of Homer (II. 301). Chapman's own teaching is an exaltation of original genius over talent guided by rules or models. "*Homers* Poems", he says, "were writ from a free furie, an absolute and full soule, Virgils out of a courtly, laborious, and altogether imitatorie spirit" (p. 298)—a sentence that has in it the possibility of dissolving the whole neo-classic fabric of rules and imitation and that contains the essence of Young's essay in 1759. Yet the assertion of the necessity for original genius is far from uncommon

---

[1] *Supra*, pp. 52—53. — [2] *Supra*, pp. 47—48.
[3] Cf. I. 204—205.

among the Elizabethans[1], though the contrast is more strongly expressed here. Still Chapman's praise for genius contributes only indirectly to the development of the historical point of view. Fortunately he can be quoted directly against the craze for classical measures—

> "Sweet Poesy
> Will not be clad in her supremacy
> With those strange garments (Rome's hexameters),
> As she is English."[2]

Mere's *Palladis Tamia* (1598) offers us nothing, except his condemnation of the long list of medieval romances (II. 308). In 1599 appeared another brief plea for English hexameters and pentameters by some "Anon" in an address to the "Reader" prefixed to the *First Booke of the Preservation of King Henry the VII,*[3] certainly a belated plea. Vaughan's *Golden Grove* (1600) shows him opposed to the abuses of poetry and a contemner of all "stage playes", but a defender of "true" poetry.[4]

Why Campion should write his *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* as late as 1602, and why he wrote it at all, is hard to explain today; the attempt at classical verse had practically ceased, and he himself was a pastmaster in the native verse forms.[5] It would hardly be worth while to quote his arguments or the details of his system, were it not that they furnished Daniel his excuse for his *Defence.* Campion opens with the hackneyed account of how "Learning first flourished in *Greece*; from

---

[1] Cf. Lodge, I. 71; Sidney, I. 195; Nash, I. 309; Puttenham, II. 3; Harrington, II. 197.

[2] Quoted by Smith, I. liv.

[3] See Smith's note, I. 377—378.

[4] Cf. the summary by Smith, II. 325—326.

[5] Cf. Smith, I. xlvii and xlix.

thence it was derived vnto the Romaines", and goes on to tell how the Barbarians deformed Learning, how Erasmus, Rewcline and More rescued Latin out of the hands of "illiterate Monks and Friers", and that "In those lack-learning times, and in barbarized Italy", rhyme began (II. 329). This is the old story, familiar since Ascham. Campion recognizes what he has to contend against, the age-old custom and the "consent of many nations", and he is too much the artist not to see the "passing pitifull success" of the attempts at English hexameters, and besides it was "altogether against the nature of our language" (pp. 330, 333). His system, therefore, is not "Dranting"; he follows more the common-sense ideas of Harvey and Puttenham. After all his own attempt is not so radical as that of Sidney and Spenser.

Daniel's answer to Campion, *A Defence of Ryme*, was not written until 1603.[1] How far he secured material from his predecessors can be easily answered. He could not have secured much, because there was not much to secure. He was probably familiar with all the previous critical literature, and may have received hints from Stanyhurst and Nash and Harrington. He probably got suggestions from King James[2], and certainly did from

[1] Smith places a question mark before this date (II. 356) and says in his note (II. 457) that it might be 1602. Schelling (p. 84), Gayley and Scott (p. 390), and Child (*Cam. Eng. Lit.*, IV. 133) say 1602. Dates are sometimes important, and as the result of an investigation of the original editions, I propose to publish soon a note on this particular date.

[2] Cf. I. 209. At the very time of writing the *Defence* Daniel was paying special compliments to James and his family. He complimented the queen of James as early as 1602, sent a "Panegyrike Congratulatory" to James on his way to London in 1603 and complimented him again in the second paragraph of his *Defence* (p. 357).

Puttenham.[1] That he knew the literature of the subject well is made clear by his definite citation of Tolomei as the originator of the movement for classical measures in modern times[2], and his proved use of Giraldi Cintio's *Discorso dei Romanzi*[3], in which, according to Spingarn, "Italian literature is for the first time critically distinguished from classical literature in regard to language, religion, and nationality".[4] Probably one definite influence was his own long continued work on his patriotic poem, the *Civil Wars*, the first part of which was published as early as 1595 and the last two books as late as 1609.[5] He was recognized as a special student in the history of his own country and in 1609 he says "many noble and worthy spirits" were urging him to write a large English history, and he actually published such a history in 1612—1617. His interest in history and especially in the history of his own country is certainly a suggestive influence upon the *Defence.*

Important as the whole essay is, I shall mention here only the chief points. Daniel is not much concerned over Campion's purely metrical schemes. The first phrase in the essay shows what the foundation of his argument is: "The Generall Custome and vse of Ryme in this Kingdom, Noble Lord, hauing been so long (as if from a Graunt of Nature) held unquestionable" (II. 357). Therefore he wrote rhymes "perceiving it agreed so well, both with the complexion of the times and mine own constitution".[6] Then comes his main thesis against Campion: "We could well

[1] Cf. the whole of Ch. V., pp. 10—11, in Vol. II.
[2] p. 368. Cf. Spingarn, *Lit. Crit. in the Ren.*, p. 126.
[3] II. 360, l. 16 and note, p. 458. — [4] *Lit. Crit. in Ren.*, p. 163.
[5] Cf. Hamelius, p. 19, and *supra*, p. 31.
[6] p. 358. Note that this is both psychological and historical.

have allowed of his numbers, had he not disgraced our Ryme, which both Custome and Nature doth most powerfully defend: Custome that is before all law, Nature that is before all Arte. Every language hath her proper number or measure fitted to vse and delight, which Custome intertaininge by the allowance of the Eare, doth indenize and make naturall" (p. 359).

To prove his thesis, he first distinguishes between classical verse and the English verse form, repeating Puttenham's argument that English verse has all necessary parts of classic verse, "number, measure and harmonie in the best proportion of music", and that modern verse is superior to ancient verse because it has the added "Harmonie" of rhyme, "giving both to the Eare an Echo of a delightful report, and to the memorie a deeper impression of what is delivered therein".[1] Then to prove the "Custom before all Law", and "Nature above all Arte", he asserts the universality of rhyme[2], for Asia, Africa and all Europe (p. 361). It cannot be called "an ill custome which nature has thus ratified, all nations received, time so long confirmed, the effects such as it performes those officies of motion for which it is employed; delighting the eare, stirring the heart, and satisfying the iudgement in such sort as I doubt whether euer single numbers will doe in our Climate" (p. 362).

This statement of the value of rhyme leads directly to his statement of the principle on which delight must depend. "And if euer they proove to become anything", he goes on, "it must be by the approbation of many ages that must give them their strength for any operation,

---

[1] p. 360. See for the superiority of modern stanzaic structure, p. 366. — [2] Cf. Puttenham, *supra,* p. 53.

as before when the world will feel where the pulse, life and enargie lies" (p. 362). But not only must there be long use to give delight, the poetic form to produce this delight varies with different nations. Hence his conclusion: "Suffer then the world to enjoy that which it knows, and what it likes: Seeing that whatsoever force of words doth moue, delight, and sway the affections of men, in what Scythian sorte soeuer it be disposed or uttered, that is true number, measure, eloquence, and the perfection of speech: which I said hath as many shapes as there be tongues or nations in the world, nor can with all the tyrannical Rules of idle Rhetorique be governed otherwise than custome and present observation will allow" (p. 363).

If delight must vary for different nations, it follows logically that no nation has the right to prescribe poetic rules for another. Daniel can even find specific fault with classical methods in versification and says that the Greeks and Latins "may thank their sword that made their tongues so famous and universall as they are" (p. 364). And then comes the positive Declaration of Independence: "all our understandings are not to be built by the square of *Greece* and *Italie.* We are the children of nature as well as they . . . the same Sunne of Discretion shineth uppon us . . . It is not bookes, but only that great booke of the world and the all-overspreading grace of heaven that makes men truly iudicial" (pp. 366—367).

This leads to the principle of historical tolerance: "Nor can it be but a touch of arrogant ignorance to hold this or that nation Barbarous, these or those times grosse, considering how this manifold creature man, wheresoeuer hee stand in the world, hath always some disposition of worth". The Greeks, then, were guilty of "presumptious

errour", when they "held all other nations barbarous but themselues", which leads directly to a defense of the loudly scorned "*Gothes*, *Vandals,* and *Langobards*". They say, says Daniel, that the inundation of the "Barbarians" overwhelmed "all the glory of learning in Europe", but the "Barbarian laws and customs are the sources of most of the state constitutions in Europe", and all the testimony of those they conquered, "proues them not without iudgement, though without Greeke and Latine" (pp. 367—368). Even in Learning the despised Barbarians have proved themselves worthy. Because China never heard of Anapests and Tribrachs, she is not therefore gross and barbarous, and that unfortunate statement of Campion's about the "pittifully deformed" Learning before Rewcline, Erasmus, and More, is equally as ignorant as the assertion of the first would be. Petrarch alone disproves the whole thing and Tolomei's plea to copy the Ancients could never induce Tasso, "the wonder of Italy", to write in anything but his native verse, "that admirable Poem of *Jerusalem* comparable to the best of the Ancients" (p. 369). Then follows a long list of eminent Renaissance scholars who awakened the nations long before Campion's trio appeared, "worthy men, I confess, and the last [More] a great ornament to this land, and", he adds triumphantly, "a Rymer". He ends his defense of the Middle Ages by a list of learned men in England in the Dark Ages themselves, from Bede to Ockam (pp. 369—370). This analogical, historical argument reaches a climax in a tribute to his own country, which begins, "Let us go no further, but looke upon the wonderfull Architecture of this state of *England,* and see whether they were deformed times that could give it such a form" (pp. 372—373).

Before this last paragraph, however, comes the statement of another essential principle: "The distribution of giftes are uniuersall, and all seasons haue them in some part. We must not thinke but that there were *Scipioes*, *Caesars*, *Catoes* and *Pompeies* borne elsewhere then at *Rome*; the rest of the world hath ever had them in the same degree of nature, though not of state ... and in all ages, though they were not Ciceronians, they knew the Art of men, which only is the *Ars Artium*, the great gift of heauen, and the chief grace and glory on earth; they had the learning of Gouernement, and ordering their State; Eloquence inough to shew their iudgements" (p. 371). At last he reaches a statement that anticipates Vico and Montesquieu: "There is but one learning ... one and the selfe-same spirit that worketh in all. We have but one bodie of Iustice, one bodie of Wisdome thorowout the whole world; which is but apparalled according to the fashion of every nation" (p. 372).

The technical details of the controversy with Campion interest us here but little. He proves decisively that Campion's much heralded "new numbers", so far as they are conformable to the language, are "Onely what was our owne before, and the same but apparelled in forraine Titles" (p. 377). Daniel is perfectly willing to accept a reform, if it is in harmony with the genius of the language. He does not admire couplets and he believes so far with Campion, that "a Tragedie would indeede best comporte with a blank verse".

This confession of his own preferences leads him to the final statement of that "relative aesthetic, varying from age to age"[1]: "But in these things, I say, I dare not

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 18 and 35—36.

take upon mee to teach that they ought to be so, or that I think it right; for indeed there is no right in these things that are continually in a wandring motion, carried with the violence of uncertaine likings, being but only the time that gives them their power" (p. 383). He concludes the essay in a vein almost gloomily philosophical, when, speaking of another matter, his last sentence says, "But this is but a Character of that perpetuall reuolution which wee see to be in all things that neuer remain the same: and wee must heerein be content to submit ourselves to the law of time, which in few yeares wil make al that for which we now contend *Nothing*" (p. 384). Nevertheless the principles of a shifting standard of taste have at last been fully stated.

An examination of Daniel's *Defence of Ryme* cannot end better than in his own words: "And therefore heere I stand foorth, onelie to make good the place we have thus taken up, and to defend the sacred monuments erected therein, which containe the honour of the dead, the fame of the liuing, the glory of peace, and the best power of our speach, and wherein so many honourable spirits have sacrificed to Memorie their dearest passions, shewing by what diuine influence they have been moued and under what starrs they lived" (p. 381).

IV. Summary.

Only the unusual importance of Daniel for this whole study can justify the amount of space that has been devoted to him. As was pointed out above, what his predecessors said on the historical point of view from 1570 to 1603 does not account in itself for the space given to them. We could not expect them to do more than assume a

dogmatism drawn from classic sources, because the greater part of them had seen little of the national literature worth comparing, or even contrasting, with the classic literature from which the dogmatic rules were drawn. Elizabethan criticism arose from the two-fold attack of reformers, the attack of the Puritans and moralists on the base and scurrilous literature which tickled the ears of the groundlings before the great Elizabethan literature was born, and the attack of literary reformers whose patriotic zeal wished to give the English language and English poetry the perfection of the only great literature they knew. The first attack taking the form of the familiar medieval and renaissance citation of authorities, the defenders of poetry were compelled to crush their opponents by the citation of greater or more authorities, a wholly unhistorical procedure. The literary reformers were never wholly so dogmatic as to believe or assert that the English language or poetry could be treated exactly as Latin or Greek and their poetry; yet as a whole Elizabethan criticism spent itself largely in a dilettante fooling with exotic verse systems and a noble defense of poetry on moral and philosophical grounds.

In direct utterance on the historical point of view there are found in the whole period only a few odd sentences in Stanyhurst, King James, Nash and Harrington and one whole chapter in Puttenham which could have contributed to the statement of the historical point of view by Daniel. In the light of what had gone before and what followed for the next century and a half, Daniel's achievement was nothing less than remarkable. On the whole, no single essay is comparable to it before Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* in 1762. Daniel not only

gave the death blow to the craze for foreign meters, but he also re-established the credit of the Middle Ages. He affirmed a century before Du Bos that delight is the one test for poetry, and he showed finally that any successful poetry can only be composed in harmony with the spirit of its own age and its own national tradition and character. With this assertion of a relative standard of judgment he exhibited a tolerance wholly in keeping with such a breadth of view. With Daniel, then, Elizabethan criticism reached both its end and its climax.

Lebenslauf.

Ich, George Morey Miller, protest. Konfession, wurde geboren am 17. September 1868 zu Cope, Indiana, in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Den ersten Unterricht erhielt ich an der Volksschule in Cope, Indiana, und Hopewell, Indiana, und später an der Vorschule der Indiana Universität in Bloomington, Indiana. Von September 1886 bis April 1888 war ich Lehrer an der Volksschule in Cope, Indiana. Im Herbst 1888 immatrikulierte ich mich an der Indiana Universität und erlangte daselbst im Juni 1892 den Grad A. B. Von September 1892 bis Juni 1897 war ich Lehrer an den Hochschulen (High Schools) in Noblesville, Indiana, und Peru, Indiana. In den Jahren 1897—1898 und 1899—1900 immatrikulierte ich mich an der Harvard Universität, wo ich in erster Linie bei Kittredge, Wendell, Baker, Gates, Robinson, von Jagemann und Sheldon hörte. Im Juni 1898 erlangte ich den Grad A. M. von der Harvard Universität. 1898—1899 war ich «Instructor in English» an der Universität von Cincinnati; 1899—1900 «Assistant in English» an Radclyffe College (in der Harvard Universität); 1900—1901 «Acting Professor of English» an dem Washington State College; 1901—1902 «Instruktor in English» an der Universität von Wisconsin; 1902 bis 1907 «Assistant Professor of English» und seit 1907

«Associate Professor of English» an der Universität von Cincinnati. Im Sommersemester 1907 immatrikulierte ich mich an der Universität Heidelberg, wo ich im Sommersemester 1908, Wintersemester 1908—1909, Sommersemester 1909 und Sommersemester 1910 weiterstudierte. In Heidelberg hörte ich in erster Linie bei Hoops, Neumann und Oncken. Allen meinen Lehrern, vor allem Kittredge (dem ich die Anregung zu meiner Monographie über «The Dramatic Element in the Popular Ballad» verdanke), Wendell, Baker und Gates in Amerika und den zuletzt genannten in Heidelberg, bin ich zu Dank verpflichtet. Besonderen Dank aber schulde ich Herrn Geh. Hofrat Hoops, dessen Ermutigung und dessen Rat mir geholfen haben, meine Arbeit erfolgreich zu Ende zu führen.
